

Sleep Apnea and Pain Management

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The special focus topic this month is *Pain Management and Rehabilitation* and how it relates to:

- Back Pain
- Chiropractic
- Headaches and Migraines
- Tooth and Jaw Pain
- Physical Therapy
- Cardiac and Stroke
- Rehab, Sport and Accident Injuries and
- More...

The challenge is to enable you, the reader, to see how our body's relation to survival, which begins with its ability to inhale and exhale relates to the above topic. It is also to influence you to research and understand the details of the jaw-tongue-throat relationship that controls ease of airflow and, therefore, pivotally, impacts and is impacted by the rest of the body.

Our multicultural belief that life begins with and is sustained by breath, inaccurately assumes unimpeded airflow. Our airway, in the throat area, that controls airflow, is unstable. Obstructive sleep apnea (OSA) reveals breathing impairment from this anatomic instability impact on the three-dimensional size and shape of our pharyngeal airway. Contrary to contemporary conversation, more than by cross-sectional area alone, this is aerodynamically influenced by its shape and contours.

This anatomy does not go on vacation while we are awake, it just has different relationships with the rest of our body in both degree and character and, although normal scientific inquiry is expected to study and understand it, this may not be the case.

This condition, while in plain sight, is missing from our consciousness and priorities as it is at odds with our human survival need for instant and convenient fixes for our complaints and concerns and that this has led to a relieve, repair and replace focus rather than fully understanding and preventing it.

Prior articles referenced how our body compensates for this structural relationship while awake and asleep through:

- Clenching and/or grinding teeth (more often during sleep)
- Posture changes (poor posture while awake and postural changes while asleep)
- Increased adrenaline secreted as in the fight or flight "stress" response to increase muscle tone and activity support the above actions, breathing, circulation and more.

If we apply knowledge of and appreciation for this to pain management and rehabilitation of many conditions and interventions listed above, we can see how working intra-professionally in research, education and application can address compensations underlying and impacted by these conditions and our current approaches to managing them.